that may be imposed by the Director General of Foreign Trade. A ceiling of 5,000 Kg. of Sandalwood Oil has been permitted for exports during the year keeping in mind the availability of sandal wood from legal sources and the requirements of various domestic industries.

The decision to allow the export of sandalwood oil subject to the above mentioned conditions was taken on the recommendation of Ministry of Environment & Forests on the ground that Sandalwood oil being a forest produce and not a machine finished product, its exports cannot be freely permitted.

So far as Jasmine Concentrates is concerned, the same is not appearing in the Negative List of Exports and hence is freely allowed for export to all permissibe destinations subject to any other law for the time being in force.

Smuggling of Cardamom

2293. SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to refer to the answer to Starred Question 245 given in the Rajya Sabha on 9th December, 1996 and state:

(a) whether the concerned customs authorities and other officers are vigilant to prevent smuggling of cardamom to India;

(b) whether any instance of cardamom smuggling has been detected so far;

(c) if so, action taken against the culprits; and

(d) whether any search has been made in the domestic market to find out whether any foreign cardamom is being sold in the market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) to (d) On receipt of complaints of cardamom of Guatemalan orgin being smuggled from Nepal to India, all Concerned Customs authorities and their field formations were alerted. Deptt. of Revenue launched a special drive to intercept the cardamom being smuggled from Nepal into India and the drive has resulted in a number of recent seizures of cardamom on the Indo-Nepal border. The details of the seizures of Cardamom on the Indo-Nepal border are as under:—

Year	Quantity seized (in kgs.)
1995-96	323
1996-97 (Prov.) (Upto Dec. 96)	27891

Smuggling of Rubber

2294. SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has come to the notice of Government that smuggling of rubber is a usual occurence through our borders;

(b) whether any such smuggling has been detected so far; and

(c) if so, action being taken to check it in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Coffee Plantation in the Hilly Areas of Andhra Pradesh

2295. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any headway has been made by the Coffee Board to plant coffee in the hilly areas of Andhra Pradesh;

(b) whether any survey has been done of the suitable areas of Andhra Pradesh for coffee cultivation; and

(c) if so, proposals under consideration by the Coffee Board to extend coffee cultivation in Andhra Pradesh in 1997-98?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. Coffee Board had conducted survey during 1970s and identified 11,000 ha. of land as suitable for coffee cultivation in Andhra Pradesh. Coffee Board has since identified another 12,000 ha. of land suitable for extension of coffee cultivation in the tribal/small grower sector.

(c) Coffee Board in its Ninth Plan proposal has recommended to extend support for expansion of coffee in 9,000 ha. in the tribal/small grower sector by providing planting incentive.

Impact of Expanding OGL

2296. SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have recently shifted a number of items from Special Import Licence list to the Open General Licence (OGL) and from restricted list to the Special Import Licence list;

(b) if so, the details thereof, item-wise and the approximate duty the Government are likely to earn annually; and

(c) the impact on indigenous industries due to this change?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir, as part of the ongoing process of review of the Export and Import Policy, changes in the Import Policy of a few items have recently been made as per details indicated in Ministry of Commerce Notification No. 23(RE-96) dated 10.2.1997, copies of which are available in the Parliament Library. As the notification has been recently issued, it would be difficult to make any assessment regarding annual duty likely to be earned by Government on account of import of these items or their impact on indigenous industry.

Hurdles in Debt Repayment Mechanism

2297. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka Tobacco Farmers' Federation has urged the Prime Minister to direct the Commerce Ministry to remove the hurdles in the debt repayment mechanism to CIS countries and increase the tobacco exporters to these countries to a minimum of 30 billion kg. this year; and

(b) if so, the action taken thereon to tide over the present crisis of surplus tobacco production and promote sales?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) Yes Sir, Andhra Pradesh & Karnataka Tobacco Farmers' Federation in their representation have suggested for (i) enhancement of exports quota to Russia under the debt repayment from 20,000 tonnes to 30,000 MTs, and (ii) for removal of hurdles in exports under the debt repayment route.

(b) Under a bilateral perspective plan agreement, the Russian Government allocates rupee repayment funds to facilitate import of Tobacco upto 20,000 metric tonnes from India each year. The perspective Plan is at present operational for the period 1995-97. Some of the steps taken/being taken to assist farmers and to enhance exports include:—

(i) Exploring possibilities of entering into long term supply contracts with the tobacco processing plants in Russia.

(ii) Persuading Russian authorities through bilateral discussions to fully utilise the funds allocated under the rupee repayment funds for pruchase of tobacco from India.